

F A B L E S 52

WILLINGHAM/BUCKINGHAM/LEIALOHA OCT 06 2.99 CAN 4.00


PART ONE  
SONS OF EMPIRE  
Plus a backup story by  
GENE HA



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JJ06



That summer there was a great fire in the restricted hills, northwest of the Imperial City.



According to a confidential report that passed through my office, the burning that day was confined to one small woodcarver's hut and a surrounding grove of old trees.



Hardly much of a disaster.

HERE, DAD, I FOUND ONE OF YOUR WOODWORKING TOOLS.

WELL, MOST OF ONE, ANYWAY.

And yet the senior ministers, administrators and secretaries in the highest levels of the Imperial bureaucracy seemed much disturbed by it.



OH DEAR, OH DEAR.

## SOME IDEAS TOWARD THE PROSPECT OF A FINAL SOLUTION FOR FABLETOWN

### - part One of SONS OF EMPIRE -

Bill Willingham writer-creator      Mark Buckingham penciller      Steve Leialoha inker      Lee Loughridge colors      Todd Klein letters

James Jean cover      Angela Rufino assistant editor      Shelly Bond editor



The Emperor himself was in an inconsolable rage for three days. Dozens of his servants, counselors and closest aides died before His ire abated.

Or so I heard.



Two weeks later I was summoned to a meeting in that very same restricted area. My task was to serve as secretary, recording the official minutes of that conference.

PACK A BAG AND YOUR CLERICAL TOOLS, MUPPLECOCK. YOU'RE LEAVING TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS.



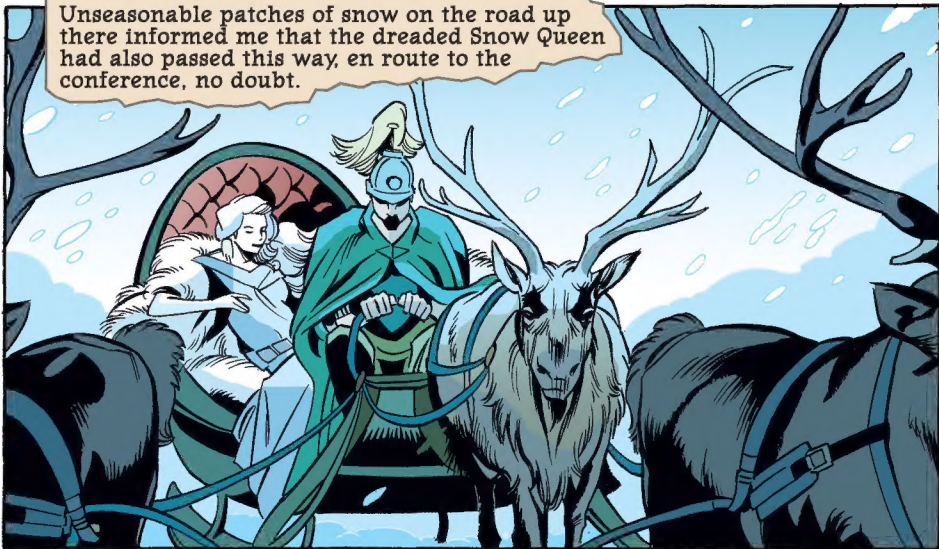
On the way up into the hills I passed all manner of carriage, cart and mounted soldier coming and going.

And I was ordered to dress in only my finest clothes and robes of office. Apparently a very important meeting was in the offing.

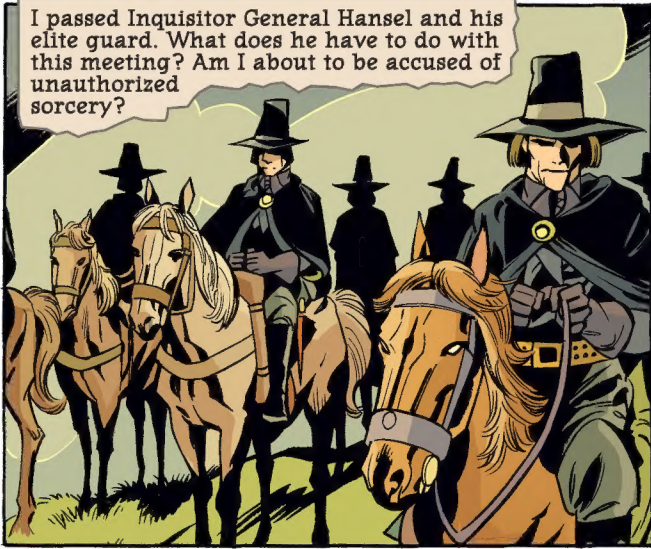
BUT WHY INVOLVE ME? I'M NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL.



Unseasonable patches of snow on the road up there informed me that the dreaded Snow Queen had also passed this way, en route to the conference, no doubt.



I passed Inquisitor General Hansel and his elite guard. What does he have to do with this meeting? Am I about to be accused of unauthorized sorcery?

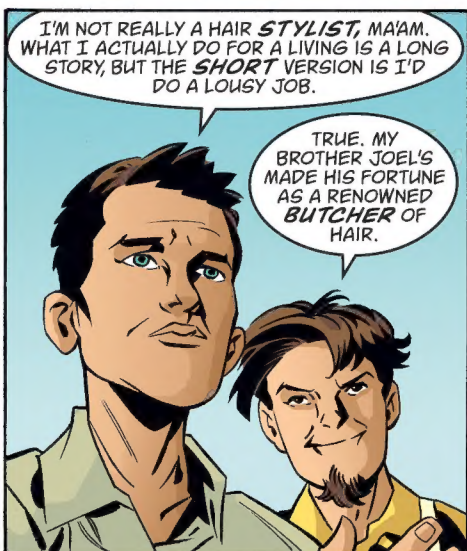
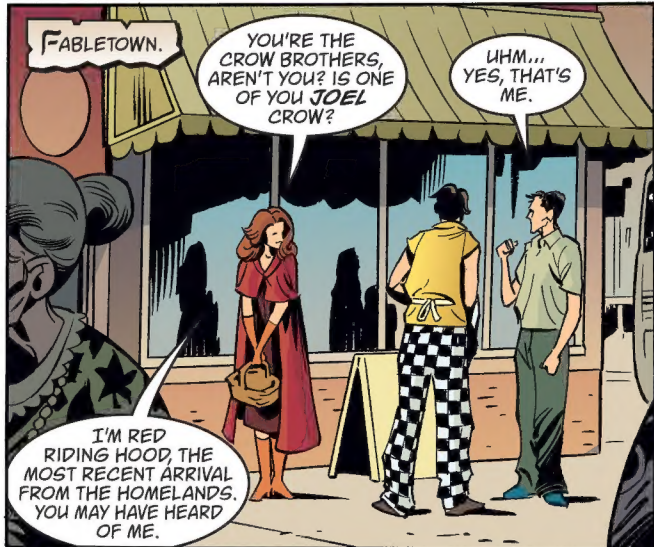


I have nothing to do with sorcery, of course, but that hasn't saved others who've come to Lord Hansel's fearsome attention.



And then I passed the dreaded Nome King. What sort of conference was this to be?





Of all the wonders I spied on the road, the greatest marvel awaited me at the conclusion of my short journey.



There were wooden soldiers here in abundance.

I've only ever seen one of these elite and mysterious creatures before, once in the Imperial City, and then only at a distance.



But suddenly they're everywhere--dozens, or maybe more.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MEAT?



DID YOU HONESTLY IMAGINE I'VE REACHED OUT MY HAND TO HELP YOU FROM YOUR CARRIAGE?

HAND ME YOUR IDENTIFICATION PAPERS, BUREAUCRAT, AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

UHM... OKAY, AS SOON AS I--



AND DON'T EVER PRESUME TO TOUCH ME AGAIN. I AM LIEUTENANT OAKHEART OF THE 23RD HORDE. I'M NO BODY SERVANT TO CLERICS.



THESE SEEM TO BE IN ORDER. NOW ATTEND TO YOUR RULES OF CONDUCT DURING THIS CONFERENCE.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, KNOW THAT I'M YOUR OFFICIAL CHAPERONE. THAT **DOESN'T** MEAN I'M YOUR GUARD.



I'M NOT HERE TO PROTECT YOU, I'M HERE TO PROTECT IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE EMPIRE FROM YOU.

AND DON'T EVER MISTAKE ME FOR YOUR VALET. I'M NOT HERE TO CARRY YOUR THINGS.



AND NEVER ATTEMPT TO GO ANYWHERE **WITHOUT** ME. I DON'T EAT, SHIT, SLEEP OR GET DISTRACTED, SO I'LL ALWAYS BE NEARBY AND I'LL ALWAYS BE WATCHING YOU.

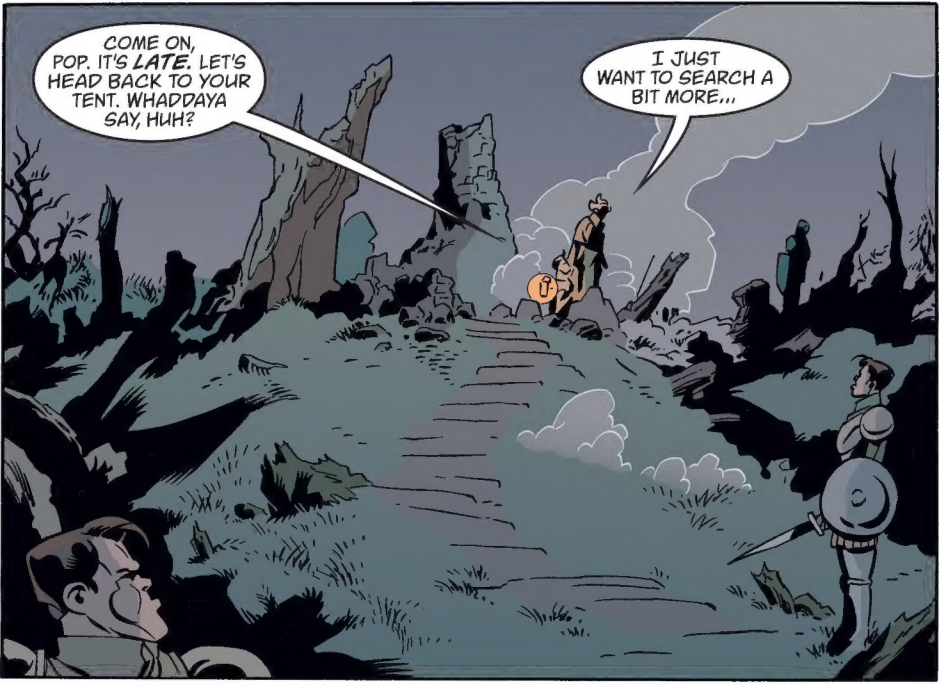
FOLLOW ME. YOUR TENT'S THIS WAY.



STAY HERE UNTIL THEY SEND FOR YOU.



I fear that terrible business is about to be initiated in this pleasant sylvan setting.

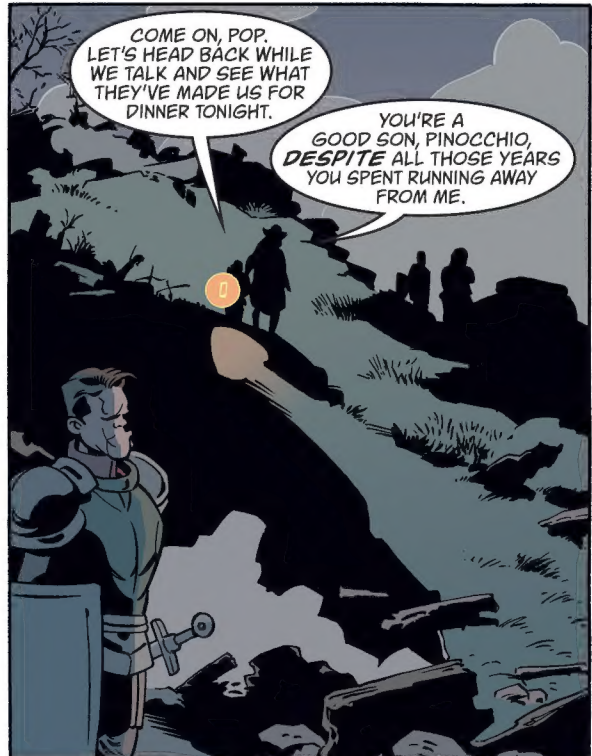






THEY'RE A **HARDY** BUNCH OF BASTARDS WHEN THEY NEED TO BE. REMEMBER, I **LIVED** AMONG THEM FOR A LONG TIME.

I KNOW, SON. THAT'S WHY YOUR COUNSEL WILL BE SO VALUABLE IN THIS GATHERING.



COME ON, POP. LET'S HEAD BACK WHILE WE TALK AND SEE WHAT THEY'VE MADE US FOR DINNER TONIGHT.

YOU'RE A GOOD SON, PINOCCHIO, **DESPITE** ALL THOSE YEARS YOU SPENT RUNNING AWAY FROM ME.



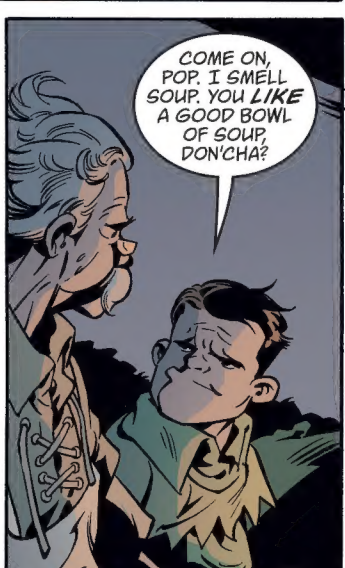
WELL, NO MORE OF THAT. I'M STICKING **AROUND** FOR AWHILE, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO TALK YOU OUT OF DOING SOMETHING **DUMB**.

DON'T OVERSTEP!

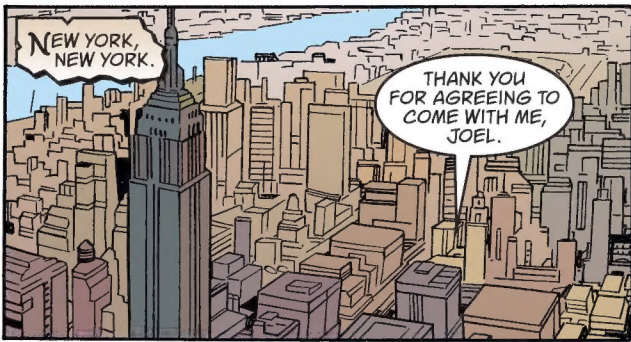


YOU'RE MY FIRST SON AND THAT MEANS YOU'LL **ALWAYS** HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART, BUT A CHILD MUST SHOW **RESPECT** TO HIS FATHER.

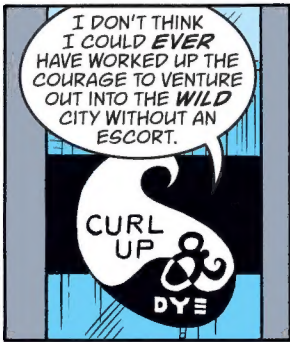
AND SO KNOW THIS AS AN ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY: **WHATEVER** I DECIDE HERE, YOU'LL HELP US ACCOMPLISH IT-WITH **ENTHUSIASM**.



COME ON, POP. I SMELL SOUP. YOU **LIKE** A GOOD BOWL OF SOUP, DON'CHA?



THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO COME WITH ME, JOEL.







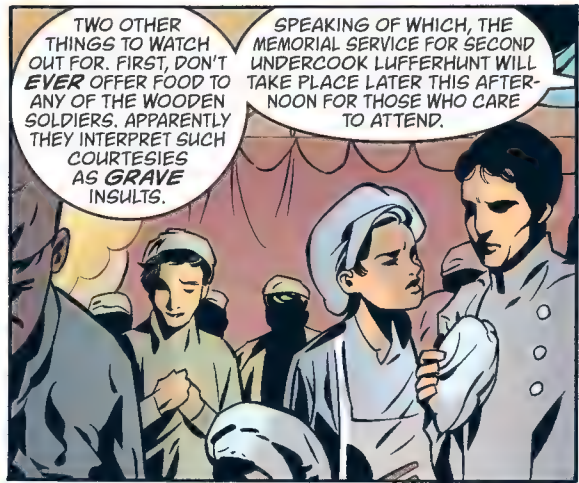
WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO BE ALLOWED TO SERVE SOME VERY IMPORTANT IMPERIAL DIGNITARIES TODAY AND IN THE DAYS TO COME.

THEY WILL BE CONDUCTING AN IMPORTANT MEETING AND WILL BE EXPECTING FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE EACH TIME THEY CHOOSE TO TAKE A BREAK.



AND WE WON'T KNOW WHEN THEY'LL DECIDE TO TAKE THESE BREAKS.

SO, NOT ONLY MUST EVERYTHING BE PREPARED PERFECTLY, IT MUST BE READY AT ALL TIMES.



TWO OTHER THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR. FIRST, DON'T EVER OFFER FOOD TO ANY OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS. APPARENTLY THEY INTERPRET SUCH COURTESIES AS GRAVE INSULTS.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SECOND UNDERCOOK LUFFERHUNT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER THIS AFTERNOON FOR THOSE WHO CARE TO ATTEND.



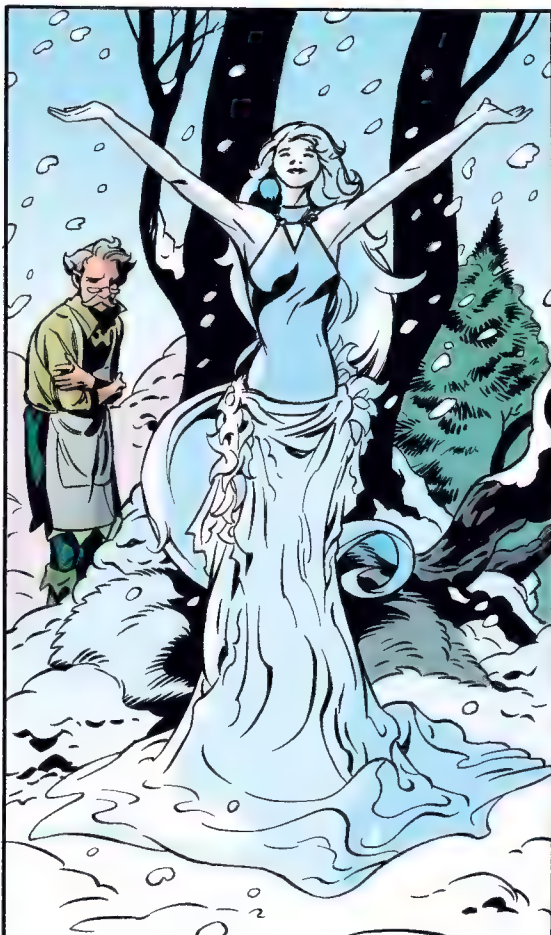
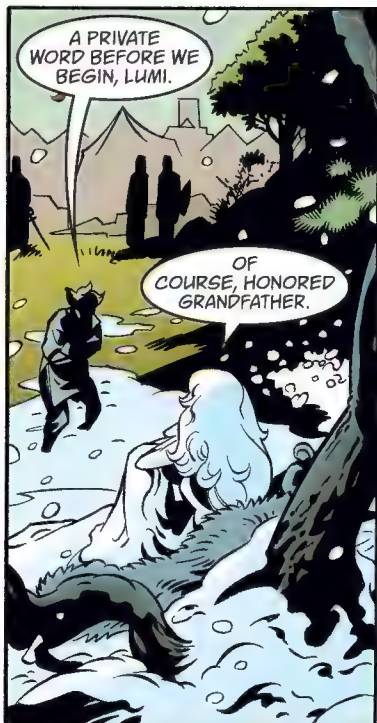
SECOND: SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED A LITTLE OLD WOODCARVER FELLOW SHUFFLING AND PUTTERING AROUND HERE.

I'VE BEEN INFORMED HE'S NOT AMONG THE SERVING STAFF OR PEASANT WORKERS, SO PLEASE QUIT GIVING HIM ORDERS TO FETCH THIS OR HAUL THAT.



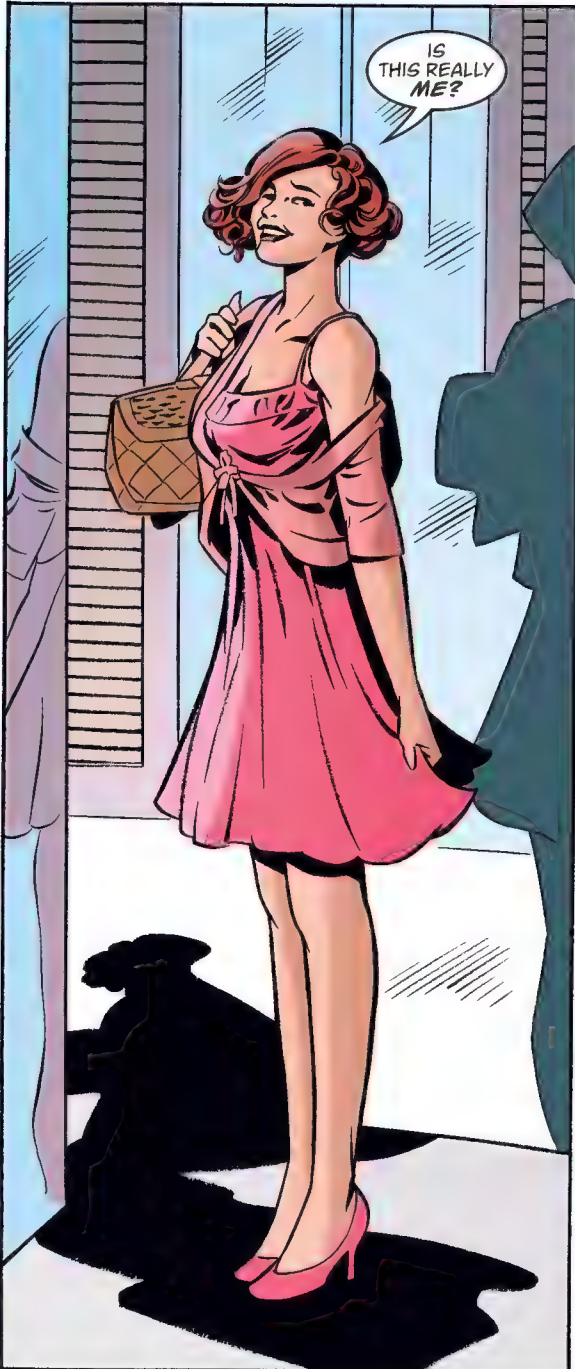
APPARENTLY HE'S BEEN SUMMONED HERE TO TESTIFY IN FRONT OF THIS COUNCIL.

AND SO, FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING, HE'S TO BE TREATED WITH EVERY GRACE AND DEFERENCE, JUST AS IF HE WERE ONE OF THE ACTUAL DIGNITARIES.





BUT I LOOK SO... DIFFERENT.





I HOPE AMBROSE LIKES ME THIS WAY.

IF NOT, FLYCATCHER SURE WILL.



I REALLY NEED TO GET BACK TO WORK NOW, MISS.

YOU'VE BEEN SO SWEET TO ESCORT ME TODAY, JOEL. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

YOU CAN JUST LEAVE THE PACKAGES HERE AND AMBROSE WILL HELP ME GET THEM HOME.



GOOD AFTERNOON, AMBROSE. HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

UHM... HELLO, MISS, I, UHM-- RIDING HOOD? IS THAT YOU?



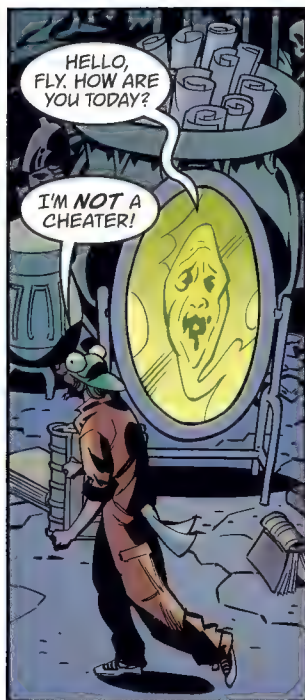
DO YOU LIKE THE NEW ME? IS IT TOO MUCH?

OH MY.



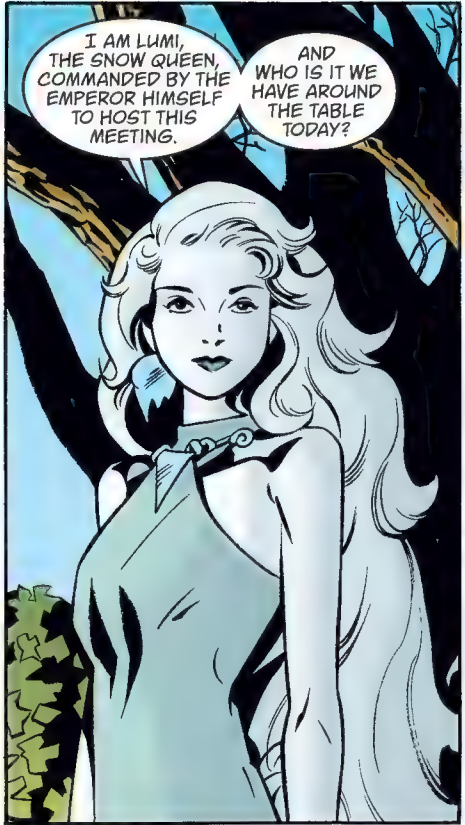








DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN OF THE EMPIRE, I BELIEVE YOU ALL **KNOW** ME, BUT IN DEFERENCE TO OUR CLERIC AND HIS OFFICIAL RECORD, I WILL INTRODUCE MYSELF.



I AM LUMI, THE SNOW QUEEN, COMMANDED BY THE EMPEROR HIMSELF TO HOST THIS MEETING.

AND WHO IS IT WE HAVE AROUND THE TABLE TODAY?

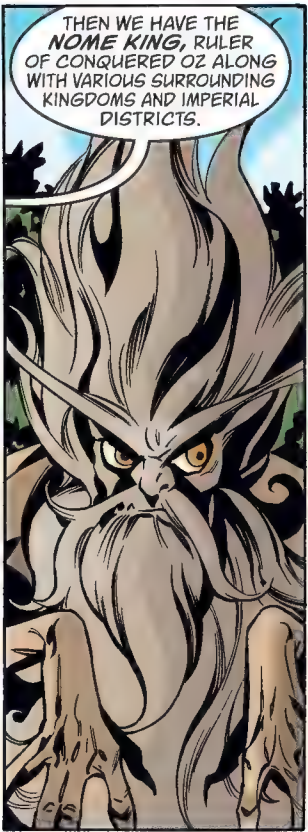


HERE WE HAVE **GEPPETTO**, THE FATHER OF THE FABLED WOODEN MEN AND MAIDENS. AS SUCH HE HAS OFTEN BEEN A **CLOSE ADVISOR** TO OUR EMPEROR.

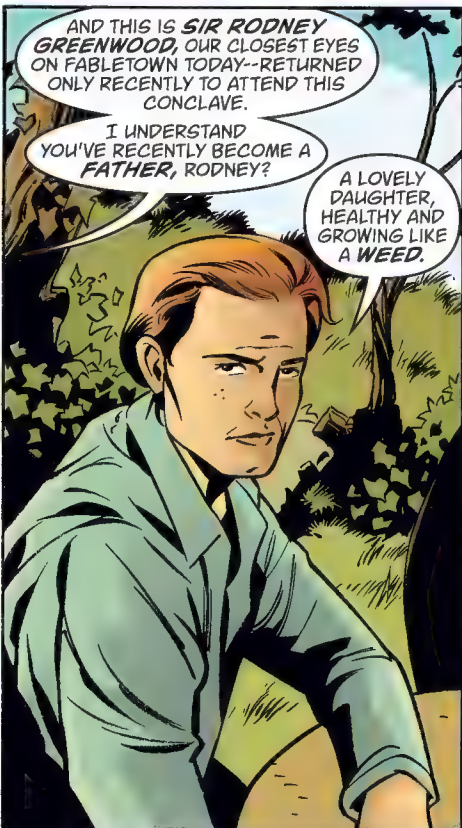


NEXT TO HIM IS HIS FIRST SON, **PINOCCHIO**, WHO HAS LIVED IN FABLETOWN AND CAN **ENLIGHTEN** THIS BODY WITH MANY DETAILS OF THOSE **SORDID CRIMINAL REFUGEES**.

UH...HI, EVERYONE.



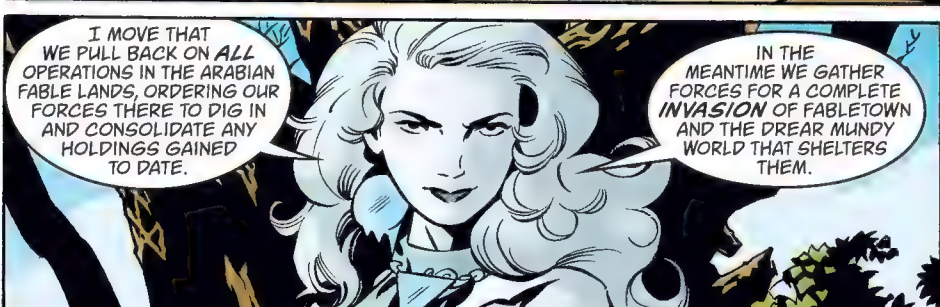
THEN WE HAVE THE **NOME KING**, RULER OF CONQUERED OZ ALONG WITH VARIOUS SURROUNDING KINGDOMS AND IMPERIAL DISTRICTS.





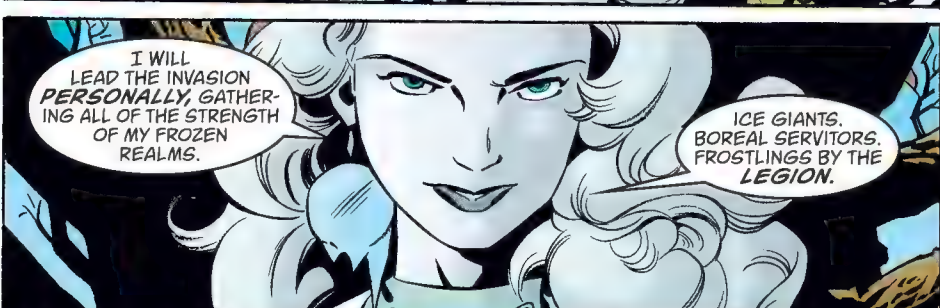
AND YOU **ALL** KNOW THE REASONS FOR THIS MEETING--TO DETERMINE THE FINAL **FATE** OF REBEL FABLETOWN.

IN LIGHT OF THEIR TWO RECENT ACTS OF **AGGRESSION** AGAINST THE EMPIRE, THE LATEST OF WHICH RESULTED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR GREATEST MILITARY RESOURCE, I THINK THERE CAN ONLY BE **ONE** DECISION.



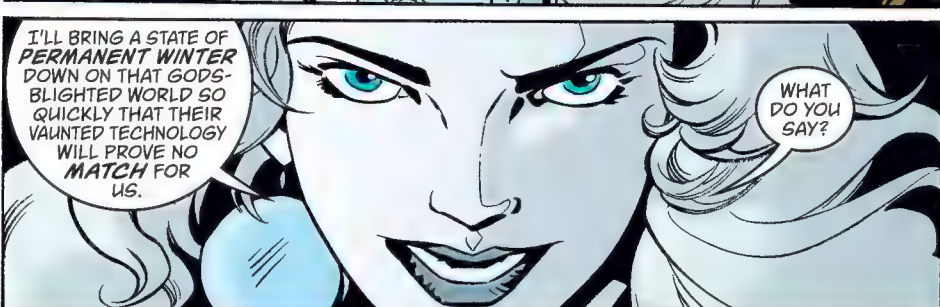
I MOVE THAT WE PULL BACK ON **ALL** OPERATIONS IN THE ARABIAN FABLE LANDS, ORDERING OUR FORCES THERE TO DIG IN AND CONSOLIDATE ANY HOLDINGS GAINED TO DATE.

IN THE MEANTIME WE GATHER FORCES FOR A COMPLETE **INVASION** OF FABLETOWN AND THE DREAR MUNDY WORLD THAT SHELTERS THEM.



I WILL LEAD THE INVASION **PERSONALLY**, GATHERING ALL OF THE STRENGTH OF MY FROZEN REALMS.

ICE GIANTS. BOREAL SERVITORS. FROSTLINGS BY THE **LEGION**.



I'LL BRING A STATE OF **PERMANENT WINTER** DOWN ON THAT GODS-BLIGHTED WORLD SO QUICKLY THAT THEIR VAUNTED TECHNOLOGY WILL PROVE NO **MATCH** FOR US.

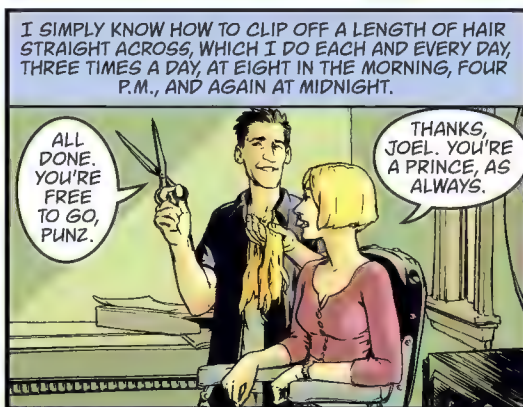
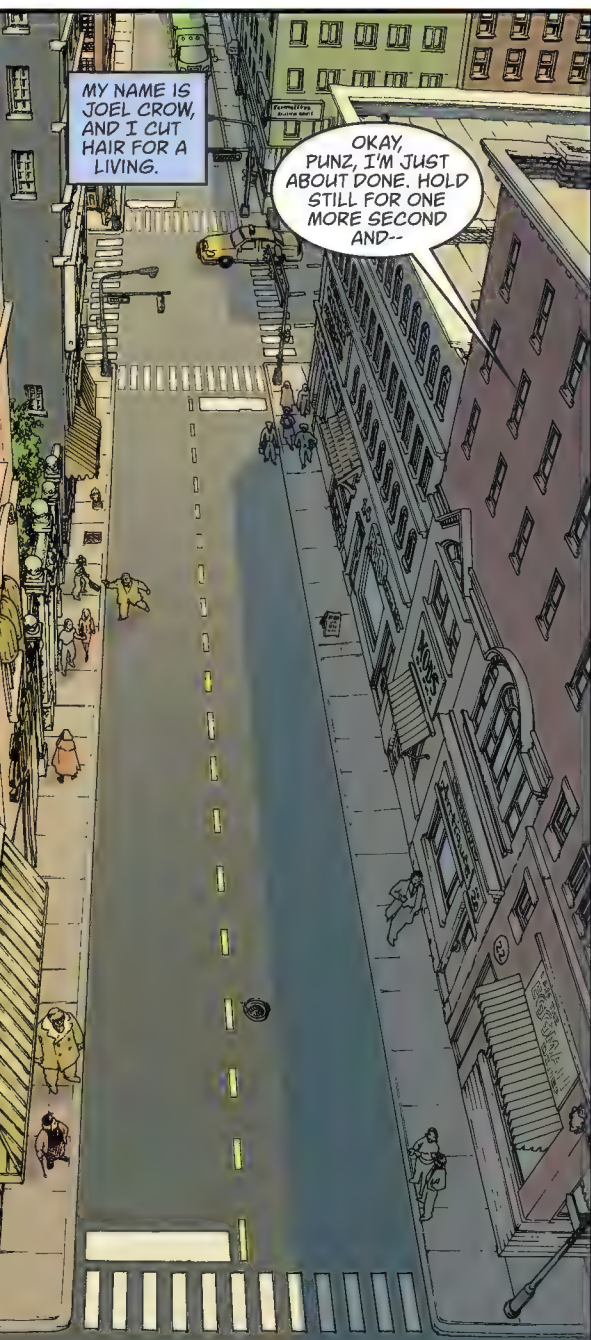
WHAT DO YOU SAY?

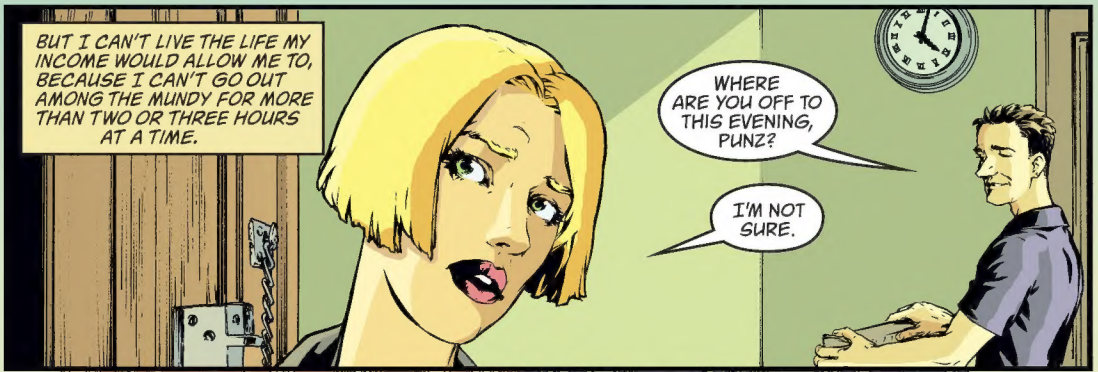
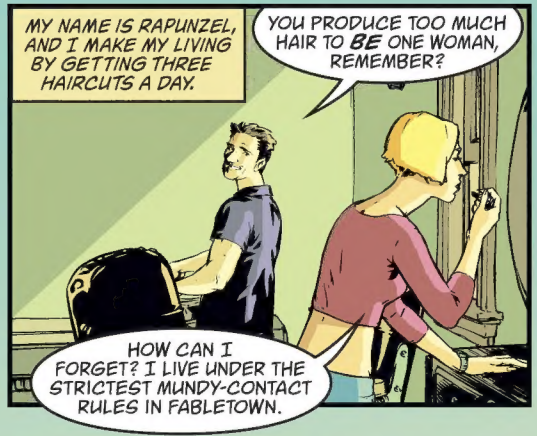
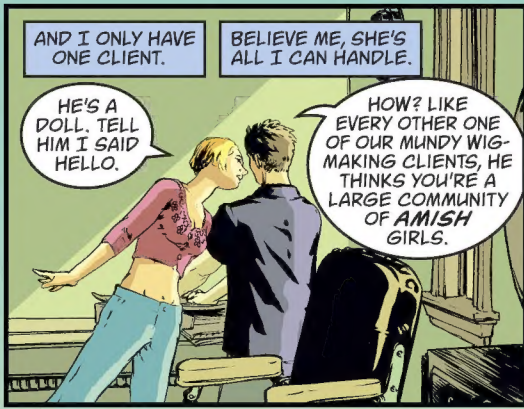
# HAIR

In which we present the first of four short-short Fables tales whose purpose is to introduce some of the other members of our (usually) happy community.



<b>BILL</b>	<b>GENE</b>	<b>LEE</b>	<b>TODD</b>	<b>JAMES</b>	<b>ANGELA</b>	<b>SHELLY</b>
<b>WILLINGHAM</b>	<b>HA</b>	<b>LOUGHRIDGE</b>	<b>KLEIN</b>	<b>JEAN</b>	<b>RUFINO</b>	<b>BOND</b>
writer - creator	artist	colors	letters	cover	asst. editor	editor





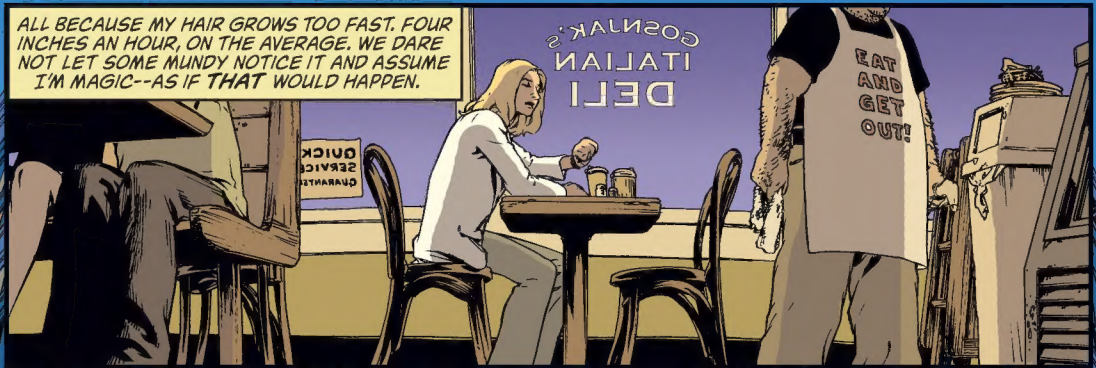
NO LEISURELY DINING IN A MUNDY RESTAURANT, SHOPPING TRIPS CONFINED TO NO MORE THAN 20 MINUTES PER STORE, AND NO VISITING THE SAME STORE WITHIN THREE WEEKS.



SAME RULES APPLY TO EVERYTHING ELSE, WITH DAMNED FEW EXCEPTIONS. I CAN STAY IN A MOVIE, BECAUSE IT'S DARK, BUT I BETTER NOT TALK TO ANYONE.



ALL BECAUSE MY HAIR GROWS TOO FAST. FOUR INCHES AN HOUR, ON THE AVERAGE. WE DARE NOT LET SOME MUNDY NOTICE IT AND ASSUME I'M MAGIC--AS IF THAT WOULD HAPPEN.



STUPID MUNDYS. STUPID WITCH AND HER STUPID CURSE. OH WELL, TIME TO GET BACK FOR MY MIDNIGHT HAIRCUT.



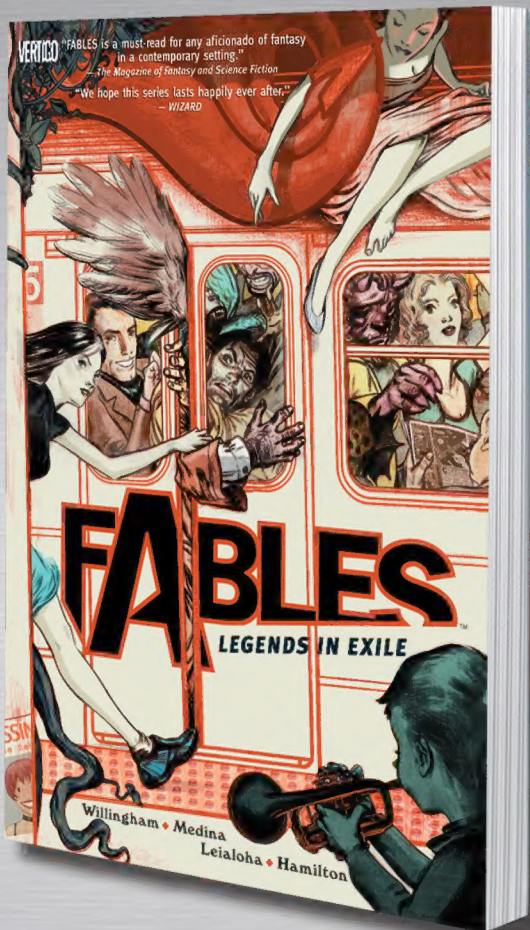
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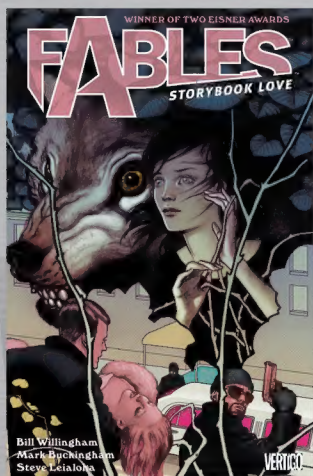
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– THE WASHINGTON POST



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- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
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- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



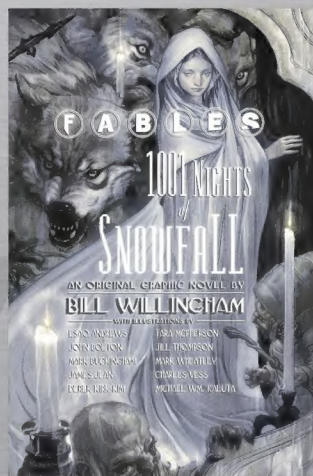
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NATHAN